

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

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S E C R E T ROME 6686

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS MACP, NATO,IT

SUBJECT CY 1973 US NAVY COMMITMENT TO NATO

REF: ROME 6282

1. CHIEF OF FOREIGN MINISTRY NATO OFFICE DA RIN RAISED WITH EMBOFF ON JULY 9 QUESTION OF CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ON REMOVAL OF THREE DESTROYER ESCORTS FROM NAPLES. DA RIN EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT WE BE CAUGHT UNPREPARED TO ANSWER PRESS QUERIES WHICH WOULD CREATE IMPRESSION THAT NATO DEFENSES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WERE BEING WEAKENED. HE SAID THE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FROM GOI POINT OF VIEW THAT PRESS GUIDANCE REFLECT AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE US STEPS TO MAINTAIN AND EVEN IMPROVE CAPABILITIES IN THE MED.

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2. WE THINK DA RIN HAS A POINT AND WOULD SUGGEST SHORT STATEMENT

ON AN IF-ASKED BASIS ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: QTE. AS PART OF ITS NAVAL MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, THE US IS RETIRING THREE OVER-AGE DEALEY CLASS DESTROYER ESCORTS HOMEPORTED IN NAPLES SINCE 1970. SAVINGS REALIZED FRM MODERNIZATION WILL PERMIT THE US NAVY TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE CAPABILITIES OF ITS NAVAL FORCES COMMITTED TO NATO IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. UNQTE. IF ASKED WHAT MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO IMPROVE NAVY CAPABILITIES, WE WOULD RESPOND AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT NATO CONSULTATIONS ARE STILL GOING ON. EVENTUALLY IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE BE ABLE TO MAKE SPECIFIC MENTION OF AN INCREASE IN NATO-COMMITTED SUBS AND PG'S, BUT WE CANNOT FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT TELL WHETHER THAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE.

3. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE, WHICH WE WOULD THEN TRY OUT ON MFA.

4. ON A RELATED MATTER, DA RIN INQUIRED WHETER THE EXISTING SUBMARINE TENDER AT LA MADDALENA WOULD SATISFY ADDITIONAL TENDING REQUIREMENTS CREATED BY THE TWO NEW SUBS TO BE COMMITTED TO SACEUR. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT HE ASSUMED IT WOULD BUT WOULD SEEK CONFIRMATION. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RESPONSE TO THIS QUERY, AS WELL AS ANY INFORMATION WE COULD GIVE DA RIN ON FURTHER PLANS FOR HOMEPORTING, RAISED IN PARA 3 REFTEL VOLPE

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NNN

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